

# BREATH PRAYER

## A PRAYER PRACTICE

### HEARING GOD WEEK TWO

Every journey begins with a single step, including the journey of learning to slow down and make space to hear God's voice. Breath Prayer is a small, simple prayer practice that you can do everyday, or even multiple times a day. The practice brings intention to the natural inhale and exhale of our bodies, to proclaim the goodness of God and release that which stands in the way of us receiving it. The repetition of the practice is a way of anchoring ourselves in something true, to remind us that God is present whether we feel it or not, and that God's goodness is unchanging.

#### 1 PREPARE

Begin by closing your eyes and simply noticing all the things that could be distracting while you do this practice - sounds, sensations in your body, wandering thoughts. Simply notice these and acknowledge with kindness that there are lots of ways to get distracted! Then, when distractions do come, simply redirect your attention with gentleness back to your breath, to God's presence, and to the prompt at hand.

#### 2 BREATHE + PRAY

Begin by sitting silently, closing your eyes, and simply bringing your attention to your breath. As you inhale, bring the air in through your nose and all the way down into your belly. Drop your shoulders back and down, and relax your jaw. As you exhale, bring the air up and out through your mouth, releasing it slowly and gently. Repeat this cycle of slow, intentional, relaxed breathing several times.

When ready, add the words of the Breath Prayer you've chosen. Most breath prayers are 6-8 syllables and fit easily into one inhale and exhale. Most are based on the Psalms and proclaim an attribute or truth of God's character as well as a God-given desire or confession. You'll speak silently the first part of the prayer each time you inhale, and then speak silently the second part of the prayer each time you exhale. Repeat the cycle of breath and prayer at least five times.

Here are some sample breath prayers you might try:

**Inhale:** The Lord is my shepherd  
**Exhale:** I shall not want (Ps. 23:1)

**Inhale:** For You are with me  
**Exhale:** I will not fear (Ps. 23:4)

**Inhale:** Be still and know  
**Exhale:** That I am God (Ps. 46:10)

**Inhale:** In Christ alone  
**Exhale:** My soul finds rest (Ps. 62:1)

**Inhale:** Your steadfast love  
**Exhale:** Is better than life (Ps. 63:3)

**Inhale:** In repentance and rest  
**Exhale:** Is my salvation (Is. 30:15)

When you feel complete, stop praying the words of the Breath Prayer and return your attention to your breath. Pause here and ask God: *"Is there anything more you are wanting to offer me today?"* Simply notice what thoughts, sensations, or feelings arise. Is there something more God wants you to know? Finish by thanking God for his presence and for this time of prayer.